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SUBJECT: UNAMID COMMANDER ON DARFUR CHALLENGES

Classified By: Ambassador W. Stuart Symington for reasons 1.4 b,d.

¶1. (C) Summary: United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) Commander, Rwandan Lieutenant General Patrick Nyamvumba, told Ambassador in an impromptu airport meeting November 10 that the UNAMID mission in Darfur was "a complicated challenge" and that the GOR was absolutely committed to sustaining their role in that mission and to having a positive impact. Asked what the principal challenges were, he replied that they ranged from fragmentation of rebel groups to multiplicity of international initiatives. They included difficulty bringing key Sudanese players to the table on the one hand and securing timely logistic support on the other. He thanked the USG for our help training, equipping, and deploying Rwandan peacekeepers and said he had an excellent relationship with COM Whitehead in Sudan. End Summary.

¶2. (C) General Nyamvumba served on Rwanda's joint staff as the J-4 before his appointment as UNAMID commander. He has long been a close and thoughtful embassy contact. On November 10, Ambassador met Nyamvumba at the airport departures area while he was preparing to return to Darfur after his first visit home since deploying this summer. He returned following Rwandan Chief of Defense General Kabarebe's October visit to Sudan to inspect Rwanda's UNAMID forces. Nyamvumba first said that his troops were dealing well with the physical rigors of duty in Darfur duty and that he himself found the duty to be less physically challenging than he had anticipated.

¶3. (C) Asked about other challenges, Nyamvumba reflected and then described them in careful detail. Before beginning his remarks, and again at the end of our conversation, Nyamvumba articulated forcefully Rwanda's resolve to see the mission succeed and his own personal commitment to that goal and his thanks to the USG for our assistance preparing Rwandan peacekeepers for the mission, providing equipment, and assisting in transportation.

¶4. (C) Nyamvumba noted first that the fundamental issue was that there was neither a peace accord or a peace process. To achieve both, he added, it was essential to bring all the key Sudanese players together. Several of them were not physically in Darfur, he continued, but were in neighboring Chad or France. Instead of repeated entreaties to them to participate, he urged, it would be useful if they were more forcefully induced to return and play an active part in talks. He said the ongoing tensions (and conflict) between Chad and Sudan represented "perhaps sixty percent of the problem." If that were resolved, he added, the rest would be much more easy to solve.

¶5. (C) Among the other challenges, Nyamvumba cited the fragmentation of rebel groups into small units and the difficulty of bringing them into a peace process, especially without having their key leaders in the area. He appreciated

USG diplomatic efforts to promote a solution and said he had a good relationship with COM Whitehead and other officials, although their opportunities to interact were limited by distance and other constraints. While recognizing the USG role, he listed as another challenge what he called the multiplicity of international initiatives and suggested that it would be very helpful for the international community to coalesce around a single approach.

¶6. (C) Finally, when asked about the logistical challenges that had long delayed arrival of critical needed materiel for Qthat had long delayed arrival of critical needed materiel for Rwandan peacekeepers in Darfur, the General replied that the problem remained. There are still delays in the port, in customs, and at other points along the long logistics link. Unlike some countries with UN operations where the host government is weak, Sudan's government strongly enforces its rules and policy, exercising control over the movement of goods and people. That also makes the UNAMID operation more difficult.

¶7. (C) Bio note: Nyamvumba was formerly Rwanda's Joint Staff Director for Logistics. Soft spoken and reserved, he is a thoughtful and constructive interlocutor. He was promoted to Lt. General in connection with his UNAMID command. Recently, he won praise from the Director of UN peacekeeping operations for his leadership and for the performance of Rwanda's UNAMID forces. He is highly thought of by his peers in the Rwandan Defense Forces and by Rwandan Chief of Defense Kabarebe, who visited Rwandan troops in Darfur in October and told us that he was pleased by his forces under Nyamvumba's leadership. End Bio Note.

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